

CONDENSED CLASSICS

OUR MUTUAL FRIEND

By CHARLES DICKENS

Condensation by Alfred S. Clark

A SINISTER bird of prey seemed Jesse Hexam, crouched in the stern of a dirty rowboat, his eyes fixed upon the broad waters of the Thames, his arms bare, his hair matted, his clothes mud-begrimed. Twilight deepened the shadows cast by the huddled buildings of London, but his gaze did not swerve. His daughter, a girl of twenty, rowing in obedience to his nods, regarded him with a fascinated dread. Suddenly he stiffened; the bird of prey had sighted the quarry. A few minutes later behind the boat a body bobbed and lunged. Hexam had found another corpse, the pockets of another drowned soul to rifle. It was this grisly livelihood that was reflected in the frightened eyes of Lizzie Hexam.

The story of that find was to be talked about in drawing rooms; in dingy homes along the waterside and in the comfortable bar of the Six Jolly Fellowship-Porters; in the dusty shop of Mr. Venus where skeletons leaped out of corners as the fire brightened; in Boffin's Bower behind which rose the dust-mounds that had created the Harmon fortune. For the body was identified as that of John Harmon, returned to England to claim a fortune of \$500,000, left him by an eccentric father upon condition that he wed a girl whom he had never seen.

John Harmon was decreed dead and the fortune came to Nicodemus Boffin. He remained the same unaffected and lovable man he had been in the past when he was foreman in charge of the dust heaps. They were singularly happy, were Mr. and Mrs. Boffin. Men and women laughed at their oddities but never with malice. Commonplace as they were, there was a sterling worth to them.

Eager to atone for his lack of schooling, Mr. Boffin hired Silas Wegg, wooden-legged vendor of sweets and ballads, to read aloud Gibbon's story of Rome. His eyes popped with astonishment as Wegg plowed stolidly ahead, making havoc of Roman names. "I didn't think there was half so many Scars in print," Mr. Boffin muttered sagely.

He acquired, too, a ward and a secretary. Bella Wilfer had been named in the Harmon will as the son's future bride. Her blighted hopes so troubled Mr. Boffin that he installed her in his home, treating her like a beloved daughter. And soon after John Harmon disappeared there came into London a mysterious John Rokesmith, who obtained the position of secretary. A secretive man was John Rokesmith, unwilling to speak of his past.

Rogue Riderhood, former partner and now sworn enemy to Jesse Hexam, set afoot suspicions that Hexam had murdered John Harmon and the law trailed the vulture of the Thames. It found Jesse dangling behind his boat as so many had dangled there before, swept overboard and caught in his rope. Eugene Wrayburn was one of the trailers, and again he looked into the clear eyes of Lizzie Hexam.

Lizzie found refuge with Fanny Cleaver, better known as the Doll's Dressmaker, a fantastic little creature with a tongue as sharp as the needle she so incessantly plied. Intruding into Lizzie's life came the love of Bradley Headstone, a morose man, and of Eugene Wrayburn, conscious that she was too far below him for marriage, unwilling to do her harm, and yet unable to resist his longing to be near her.

Rejected, Bradley Headstone vowed vengeance upon the man whom he believed responsible. In the Boffin home, too, unhappiness was brooding. Bella Wilfer, her head turned by wealth, remembering poverty at home, set her heart upon wedding a rich man and discouraged John Rokesmith. The secretary had other troubles. He was trying to put together the past. He recalled a voyage, a ship upon which he was known as John Harmon. He remembered coming ashore and going with a mate to the house of Rogue Riderhood. Somewhere was a room where he drank coffee. Then stupefaction, with gleams of memory concerned with a fight, a slide, cold water swirling about him, a rescue and a decision to test Bella by taking another name. After that the discovery of the mate's body, mistaken for that of John Harmon.

Suddenly Mr. Boffin seemed to lose his amiability. He was gruff with his secretary; he turned to stories about misers. "The more I save, the more you shall have," he said to Bella, but she did not like the cunning look in his eyes. Nor was Silas Wegg aloof from the lust for money. He cast covetous eyes upon the mounds that had made Mr. Boffin "the Golden Dust-man." He explored their lowlands and their summits, poking about for treasure. Perhaps there might be another will. He did find a later Harmon will, and cherished it as a weapon wherewith he would bleed his benefactor.

Lizzie Hexam, frightened by her lovers, disappeared. Neither Headstone nor Eugene could trace her. But Headstone fancied that Eugene would find her and for weeks he trailed his rival. Eugene was aware of this morose figure that was never far behind him, and he took an impish delight in roaming after nightfall through all the four quarters of London. At the same time, matters were approaching a climax with the Boffins. Silas Wegg was preparing his trap; Mr. Boffin was daily growing more surly. At last he blazed forth and discharged John Rokesmith for aspiring to the hand of Bella to secure the Harmon fortune. But Bella took the part of the dismissed secretary and cried bitterly as she recalled the lovable Mr. Boffin now transformed into this terrible monster of greed. She sought again the poverty of her childhood home. It did not take John Rokesmith long to find her and the cherubic Mr. Wilfer felt happily faint when he saw his Bella's head find what seemed a natural resting-place upon John's breast.

Meanwhile Eugene had found Lizzie's hiding place, near Plashwater Weir Mill Lock. Eugene rowed up the river to the hamlet, but did not notice the interested lock-keeper who swung open the gates for him. Nor did he know that a man dressed like the lock-keeper was near, watching him with baleful eyes. The latter was Bradley Headstone; the gate-keeper was Rogue Riderhood, who was known to hate Eugene. Riderhood puzzled more than a little when he saw Headstone, with murder in his eyes, in clothes precisely like his own.

Eugene walked at nightfall with Lizzie by the banks of the river. Headstone would not know that Lizzie begged Eugene to go away, but he saw their lips meet. A shadowy figure kept close to Eugene after that until something seemed suddenly to crash in his head and the stars and moon reeled in his sight. He closed with his assailant, there was a scuffle and a splash. Lizzie, tormented by her talk, had not gone to her room. She heard the splash and rushed to the river bank. When she saw a face in the river she hurriedly leaped into a boat. No man could have been more skillful with oars. She reached the floating body, caught it by the hair, secured it and screamed for help. Help did not come before she had bound and kissed that face that was so dear to her.

Scared and marred as he was, Eugene struggled back from the border of death. He did not expect to recover when he asked Lizzie to marry him, but she was as proud of him when she was made his wife as though he had been standing in full strength by her side instead of lying helplessly in bed.

Rogue Riderhood remembered that Headstone had intended him to suffer for the crime. So he announced that he would dog Headstone until he was paid handsomely. Headstone knew that the scoundrel would trail him forever, as he had trailed Eugene. He walked away without a word, with Riderhood at his heels. He stepped out upon the bridge that held back the Thames and then suddenly caught his tormentor with a grip that could not be shaken. They wrestled back and forth on the brink, steadily nearing the edge. Riderhood tried in vain to draw a knife. He fought, he tried to squirm free from that relentless embrace. At last he went over backward with Headstone gripping him. They found the bodies locked together.

In the meantime Silas Wegg tightened his screws upon the hapless Boffin. But the dramatic scene that he had planned did not work out, for there was a later will than the one he had found, giving everything to Mr. Boffin. So Mr. Wegg was suddenly swung out of the house and into a passing scavenger's cart. His wooden leg waved a grating farewell as he passed out of the Boffin house.

Bella Wilfer had become Bella Rokesmith, and there was a wonderful, tiny Bella before she understood Mr. Boffin's strange miserliness. Not till then did she learn that her name was Bella Harmon and that Mr. Boffin had been troubled by her hardness of heart. So he had decided to try her. It was for that reason that he had been so gruff and miserly. He was glad he had done it, for it had proved Bella's worth and given her the man who loved her. And now, although the Harmon fortune had been left by the last will to Mr. Boffin, he resolutely refused to take it. He kept only money enough to live comfortably for the rest of his happy days.

The magnificence of the new home where Bella was to live impressed even her impressive mother, and the cherubic father was made John's secretary and released from the numbing life that had been his for many years. But perhaps John and Bella and the Boffins too who were living with them were made happiest by the long visit that they had from Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Wrayburn. Eugene was slowly winning his way back to health and the old affected cynicism had departed. He was prouder of his wife from the slums than he was of his own distinguished family and the place in society that had been his.

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Multiplication Table Too Hard.

Caroline Herschel, the discoverer of eight comets, and the accomplished partner of her brother's astronomical labors, never could remember the multiplication table, and always had to carry a copy of it about with her.

America "Says It With Flour" for the Near East



An impressive ceremony at pier 2, army base New York, attended the loading of the Mopang with 10,000 bags of flour and 2,000 tons of general foodstuffs for the starving of the Near East. Dr. Herbert Shipman, Suffragan bishop of New York, at the special request of Bishop Manning, blessed the ship and its cargo. The flour supplies were purchased with the funds raised by the Near East relief through their novel posters, "Say it with flour."

Tells Tale of War's Changes

Map Published by National Geographic Society Reveals Made-Over Continent of Europe.

LOOKS LIKE A NEW WORLD

Changes Effected by All the Treaties, Agreements and Plebiscites Are Recorded to Date—Show Remnants of Bygone Splendor.

Washington.—"Mayflower" colonists encountered a new continent in 1620; Americans of 1921 can almost imagine their sensations as we gaze at a map of the New Europe," says a bulletin from the Washington headquarters of the National Geographic society.

"To a man who has been on Mars since 1914, the continental Europe of 1921, save for its peninsulas and islands, virtually would be a new world," continues the bulletin, issued in connection with a map recently published by the society to record changes effected by all treaties, agreements and plebiscites to date.

"Even a bird's-eye view of the made-over continent would disclose:

Cleaver-shaped Czechoslovakia, unwittingly symbolical in contour, jamming its western wedge far into Germany, lightly tipping with its eastern panhandle a much magnified Romania.

"Shrunk Austria and pared down Hungary nestling below, remnants of bygone splendor and objects of present economic charity, seem not much larger than Maine. And they are not. Add Flavor of Medieval.

"Resurrected Poland to the north bespeaks a reincarnation rather than a relic. Two free cities, Flume and Danzig, give added flavor to the medieval. "Even the shapes of the nations of central Europe tell a significant story. Compare their curving contours, as if they had been ground and rounded by ceaseless war storms, with the angular mosaic patterns of the Western states of the United States.

"Three tiny republics—Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania—rear their Aphrodite heads from the Baltic waters. Above them is suspended Finland, born without the terrible birth pangs of the new lands farther south. "The patchwork that formerly de-

FROM FRANCE TO K. OF C.



Supreme Knight James A. Flaherty with the magnificent Sevres vase presented to the Knights of Columbus by Dr. Marcel Knecht, French high commissioner, on behalf of President Millerand and the French government. The vase, which is valued at \$5,000, will be exhibited throughout the United States before being placed in the K. of C. home office building in New Haven, Conn.

American Legion Notes

"There is not the least doubt in my mind that if it had not been for the determined stand of the American Legion, Zimmer and I would still be in prison," writes Sergeant Neff, who with Sergeant Zimmer was arrested by the Germans following an attempt to capture Grover Cleveland Bergdoll, notorious slacker. "The American Legion came to my aid during one of my darkest hours, and it demonstrated by its unwavering loyalty toward a comrade that its sublime aspirations and lofty ideals concerning comradeship are a living truth."

Men entitled to navy retainer pay and not receiving it should communicate with the navy allotment officer, navy retainer pay section, Navy department, Washington, D. C., according to the American Legion Weekly. Applicants should give the following data: Full name, date of enrollment, rating and class in which enrolled, present address, present rating, number of retainer pay checks received (if any) and amount of each, date of release from active duty, date of discharge from reserves.

One of the largest single cash contributions for the benefit of disabled ex-service men has been received by the St. Louis city central executive committee of the American Legion. The amount was \$5,000, "without a string to it," given by Mrs. Newton L. G. Wilson, wealthy philanthropist of the city. The fund will be used exclusively to assist disabled men in obtaining just compensation and for the relief of their dependents.

American Legion posts in Minnesota are having a lively controversy as to which one has the oldest Legionnaire on its rolls. Redwood Falls presented Dr. Gibson, seventy-two years old, who served with the medical corps at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind., and held the record until Kimball post introduced Adam Brower, seventy-six years old, and Joe Mason, who admits eighty-six years and a highly prized membership in the Legion.

As a result of a fight waged on the floor of congress by Representative Hamilton Fish, Jr., of New York, a prominent American Legion worker, relatives of aliens who served in the American army, navy and marine corps during the World war are entitled to preferred right of entry into the United States in the three-percent immigration to be allowed during the next year under the immigration bill.

Members of the American Legion in St. Paul, Minn., cast their bread upon the waters and it was returned—a hundredfold. Last spring they gave assistance to a needy man. When the Legion men were selling theater tickets for a benefit performance for unemployed veterans the ex-service man sold 500 tickets in two days. As a result, 150 men were sent out on jobs the following day.

A vigorous campaign waged by the American Legion against disloyal activities of the Industrial Workers of the World is responsible for the stabilizing of a Legion worker by an L. W. W. fanatic, according to reports received at Legion national headquarters from Pocatello, Idaho. True to form, the L. W. W. member attacked the Legion man in a dark alley, stabbing him in the back.

For the prompt relief of disabled and unemployed ex-service men of Chicago, Theodore Roosevelt post of the American Legion staged a stag party, at which Judge K. M. Landis was a guest. Battling Nelson was in charge of the athletic program, the band of the Great Lakes naval training station provided music and stage stars contributed their services to a midnight frolic.

Commuters and street car fans of New Orleans may have to walk when the American Legion meets. Employees of the New Orleans Railway and Light company have formed a post of the Legion. The street railway men are enthusiastic members of their post and have promised to attend meetings even if they have to bring along their private cars.

An American Legion speaker has been asked to explain the aims and purposes of the organization at the annual labor picnic to be held June 18 in Kansas City, Kan. The action, which followed a conference with the mayor of the city, is intended to clear up any misunderstandings which radical elements may have fostered in the ranks of labor organizations.

Only men who were in the service during the World war will be admitted to a hotel being erected by the Portland, Ore., post of the American Legion. The post is enlarging and remodeling upper floors of its large clubhouse to accommodate 70 men.

Idaho American Legion members opened their state service and membership campaign with prayers in almost every church in the state.

Store window posters and street car signs aided Summit post of the American Legion at Akron, O., during a membership campaign.

noted the Balkan states seems to have squirmed its queer way northward toward the Baltic. As new countries are scattered freely about, Montenegro, of romantic memory, has disappeared. And familiar Turkey has all but gone.

"Ukraine tentatively slices off a corner of Russia an area comparable to that of France. Jugoslavia is the architrave for a pediment of states that bear down upon the tripartite Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes until it fairly bulges into the Adriatic.

"A map of the new Europe visualizes some phases of geography more clearly than many pages of explanation. Obviously, a peninsular people have a preferred safety insurance in modern warfare. The 'freedom of the seas' seems to have a double entendre respecting the shores that reach out for its kindly protection.

"All Europe is a peninsula of Asia. Then again western Europe is a secondary peninsula, pendant from Russia, its broad isthmus spanning the eastern boundaries of Poland and Romania from the Black to the Baltic seas.

Were Aloof From War. "Scandinavia, Denmark, Spain, Italy and Greece therefore may be described as third-degree peninsulas. The first three were aloof from the war; actual fighting did not penetrate far into the latter two.

Bedridden, He Earns His Way

With All But One Arm Paralyzed, Hal Ehrig Learns Painting and Music.

MAKES BIG MONEY AT BOTH

Injury That Laid Him Up Is Rather a Mystery to the Medical Profession, but He Has Hopes That He Will Be on His Feet Again.

Chicago.—How much courage and optimism would you have left if you had lain on your back for seven years, able to open your mouth one inch, and the rest of you numb and lifeless except your left arm? Would you feel very much like taking up painting and music and Russian wolf hounds, and making your living by them?

Hal Ehrig, 646 West 61st street, survived two serious motorcycle accidents, one in 1911 in an endurance race to Michigan City and another in 1912 in the bowl at Riverview park. Each time his left hip was badly injured, but each time he recovered with apparently no permanent disability. But with Hal, the third time was the charm. While driving an automobile at dusk he encountered a drainage ditch in the road. The car overturned on his body, lacerating the same hip. In Bed Seven Years.

To-day he lies in a half reclining position in a bed by the window. He has lain that way for seven years. But he has a smile on his face and unshaken belief that a few years will see him on his feet again, playing with his Russian wolf hounds.

"My injury is rather a mystery to the medical profession," said he. "I've got a wonderful appetite and eat my three square meals every day. But I can't move except this one arm." And he gripped the wooden bar that runs parallel to his bed and raised himself. "The doctors explain my condition as being nervous shock—when the left hip tightened up it pulled the other side of me for support.

"I could feel myself stiffening all over. I didn't know how long I was going to be laid up, but decided to be as comfortable as I could. So I had

"The eye notes obstacles that strew Berlin's one-time path of ambition to Baghdad. One may trace the sea route which island Britain gained by legitimate means to her Asiatic spheres.

"Karlshad may be as charming by its new name of Karlovy Vary but it is harder to find. Our mythical Martian needs with his map an index with old and new names to learn his way about. Patriotism has made many restored cities unrecognizable without such aid.

"Formerly the average layman regarded a map much as he did a railroad time table. It was essential upon rare occasions. Today the well informed must employ a map to understand the great educational value of his daily newspaper.

"To him who reads a map with the care that he scans the printed column the map will impart its fascinating story of historic peoples, their present-day struggles, the constant interaction of the human being and his physical environment."

Caught Pocketbook in Trout Stream. Bellefonte, Pa.—While fishing for trout near here William Gorman noticed something floating down the stream. As it came closer he recognized it as a pocketbook and worked it ashore. It contained \$55 in bills, with no clue to the identity of the owner.

"Dry" Officers Get Corks but Not Man. Clarkburg, W. Va.—More than 1,000 corks are held in jail here. They will fit half pint whisky bottles somewhere. The police are trying to locate the bottles and also the moonshine still to which the corks were consigned. A man dropped them when chased by prohibition officers.

em prop me up with pillows like I am now. "I intended going into the jewelry business at the time I was hurt. But, of course, I couldn't go on with that. And so for a while I just lay here."

One day a girl friend who dropped in to see Hal brought along a box of pastels that she didn't want. She knew he had been clever with his pencil at one time and thought he might amuse himself with them.

"I'm naturally right-handed," went on Hal. "But there's nothing like trying. I played around with the pastels and copied a magazine cover. There it is." He pointed to the wall. "When I found I could use the old mitt I got an old Bohemian artist to show me how to handle oils. He left something of his own over here one day and I copied it. He couldn't tell 'em apart."

The living room of the Ehrig abode is bright with evidences of Hal's south-pawed artistry. And he's sold a lot more, two of them for \$150 each. Some of his canvases are six feet long. Hal has them suspended from the bar running parallel with his bed and works as if painting on the ceiling.

How He Took Up Music.

Now for the music. "I took up song writing about three years ago," Hal went on. "Some fellows were over seeing who could write the best poetry. They liked mine, and we sent it to a music house to have it put to music. It was a war song called 'When We Whirl Into Berlin.' Some copies went to a pair of mine overseas and it pretty near started a riot. The boys wanted to dash right up to the front."

Since his initial venture into the realm of song Hal has written several more.

"I'm crazy about music," he continued, "but I really think I'll make most of my money on my dogs. Got two of 'em—Russian wolf hounds, worth \$5,000. They're wonderful dogs. I expect to open exclusive kennels and sell puppies. A pup brings as much as \$200.

"You know, when I went to bed I was 21 years old and 5 feet 7 inches tall. Now I am 28 years old and I'm 6 feet 2 inches tall. And my face hasn't changed—I don't look a day older than when I was hurt. Funny, isn't it?"